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June 22, 2007

WC Packet No. 05-337
CC Packet No. 96-45

Received & Inspected

JUL 3 2007

The Honorable John Shimkus
United States House of Representatives
240 Regency Center
Collinsville, IL 62234

1000-0151-0007 FCC Mail Room

Dear Representative Shimkus:

I am writing to urge you to please discourage the Federal communications Commission (FCC) from capping the Universal Service Fund (USF) for wireless providers. **Capping the USF will only harm residents of rural Illinois who rely on the fund for quality telecommunications networks for public safety and continued economic development.**

As you know, the USF ensures that rural communities across Illinois (and America) have access to modern and affordable telecommunications infrastructure. We need to ensure that the USF is administered so that rural residents can enjoy the public safety, health and economic development benefits that residents of Illinois' more urban areas already enjoy.

A proposed cap jeopardizes these funds. The FCC is considering freezing USF funding for wireless carriers at 2006 levels. A single wireless provider in Illinois received just \$1,971 from the USF in 2006. Because the Illinois Commerce Commission is considering whether to allow additional carriers to draw from the federal fund, a cap at this point in time would prevent Illinois from receiving millions of USF dollars in the years to come-funds that would help expand rural cell phone networks in the state and strengthen our resources for public safety and economic development.

We estimate the impact of a cap on USF funding for wireless will cost Illinois over \$10 million in federal support each year. This is especially unfair because Illinois consumers pay over \$260 million into the fund each year, most of which goes to other states.

To compound matters, neighboring states such as Iowa, Wisconsin, Indiana and Kentucky will continue to take in millions of dollars annually to upgrade their wireless networks, while Illinois will be capped at approximately \$1,971 per year.

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The FCC created the USF to ensure that telecommunications technology doesn't leave rural communities behind.

Rural Illinois deserves the same quality service as our big cities, but that can only happen by protecting – and expanding – the USF.

I hope you will consider this request and encourage the FC to protect this vital program. Your attention to this matter will go a long way toward helping the citizens of rural Illinois.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Holbrook", written in a cursive style.

Thomas Holbrook
State Representative
113th District

TH/jds

CC: Marlene Dortch (Federal Communications Commission, Docket No. 05-337)